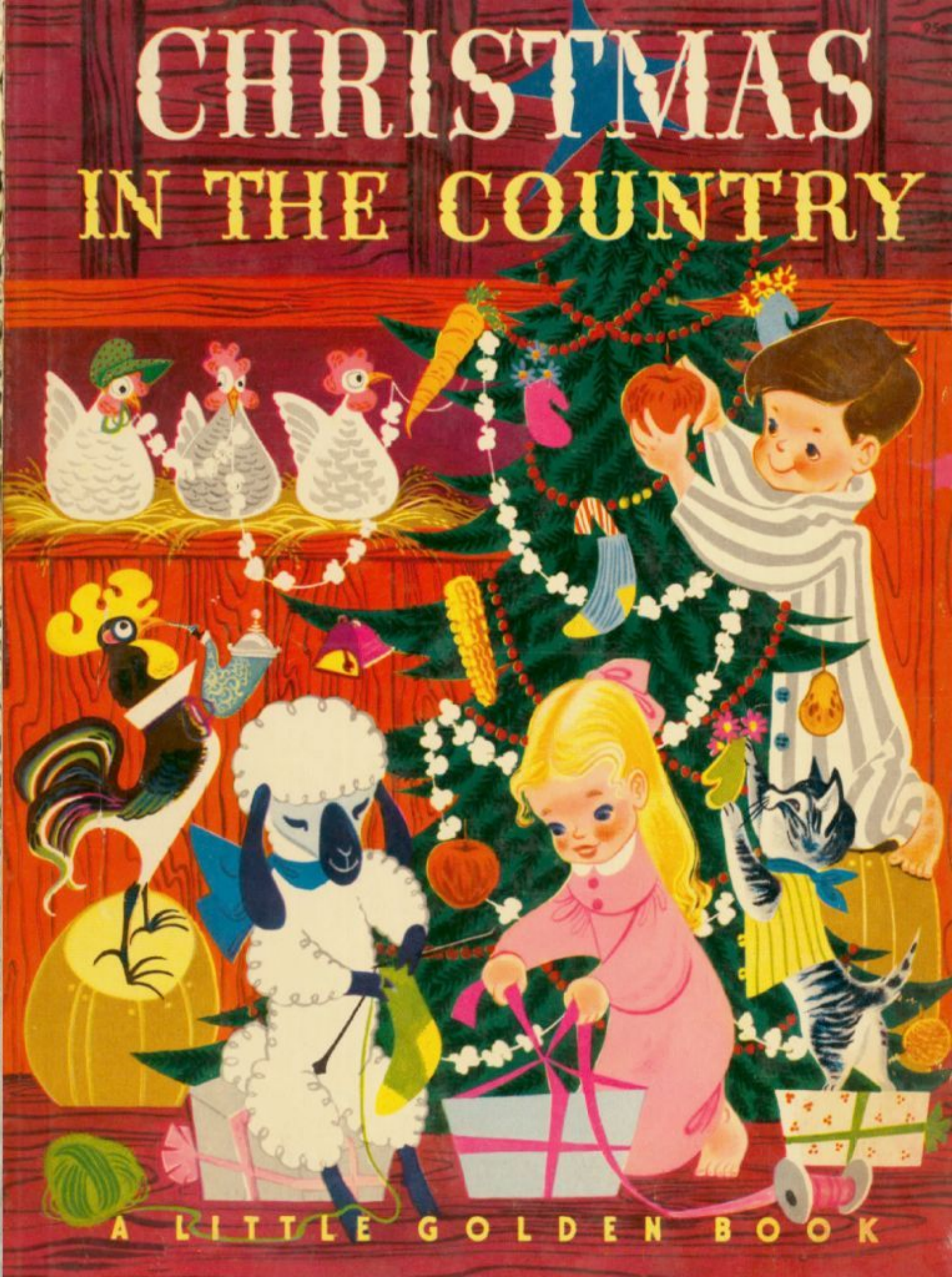
CHRISTMAS IN THE COUNTRY



A LITTLE GOLDEN BOOK

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CHRISTMAS
IN THE COUNTRY

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SIMON AND SCHUSTER · NEW YORK

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THIS IS A BRAND-NEW BOOK,
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Christmas was coming!

But as if that were not exciting enough, Betty and Bob were going to the country to spend Christmas with Grandmother and Grandfather.

They rode through the snowy countryside. And when they arrived at the station, who do you think was waiting to greet them with a great big sleigh?

"It's Father!" said Mummy and Daddy.

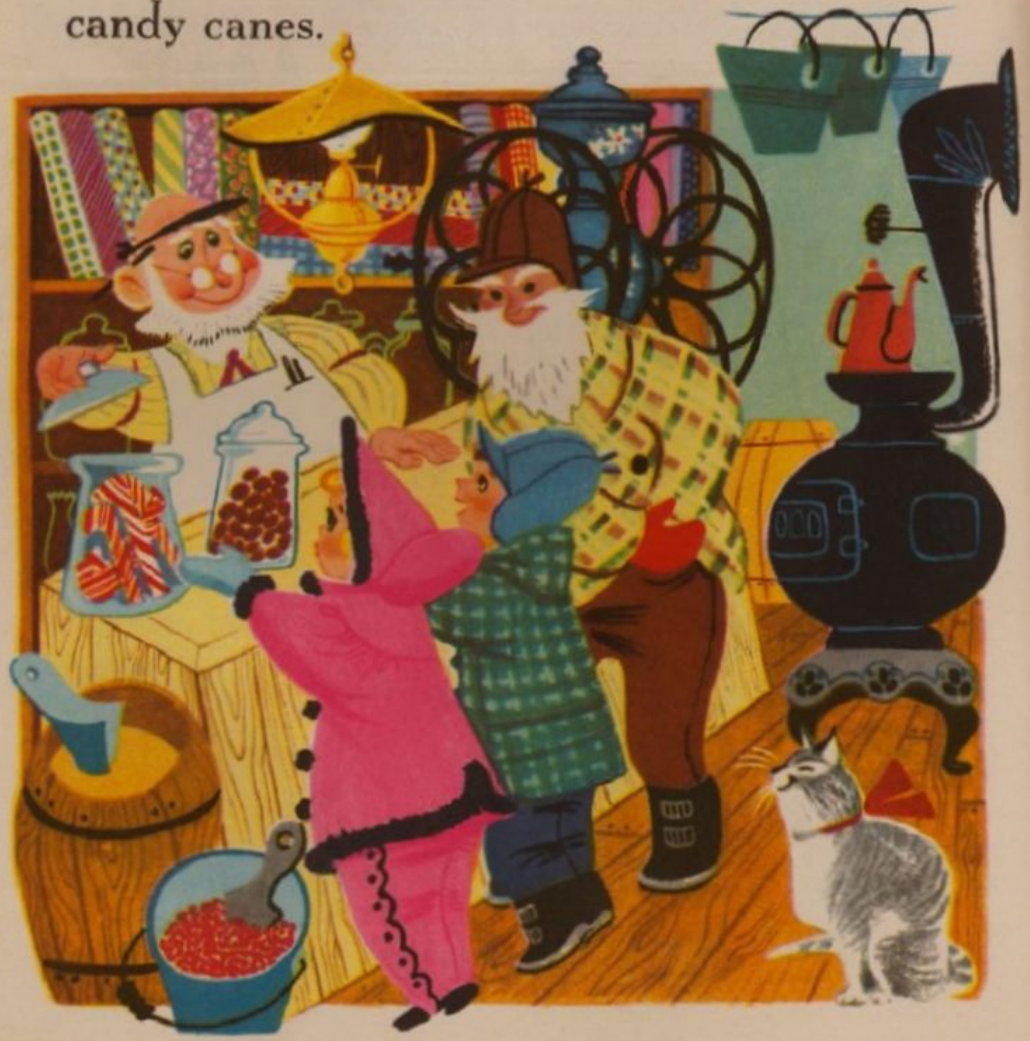
"It's Grandfather!" said Betty and Bob.

There were hugs and kisses all around, and then they all piled into the sleigh. The sleigh bells went tinkle-tinkle, the horses went snort-snort, and off they rode down the snowy village streets till Grandfather said "Whoa" right in front of the village store.

"Have to get some things for your Grandmother," he said.

"We'll help!" cried Bob and Betty.

And they did! They helped Grandfather buy some jawbreakers and gumdrops and candy canes.



Soon they were all greeting Grandmother at the door of the cozy farmhouse.

"My, how you've grown!" she said. "But you haven't outgrown candy I see," she smiled. "Come along now and get washed up."

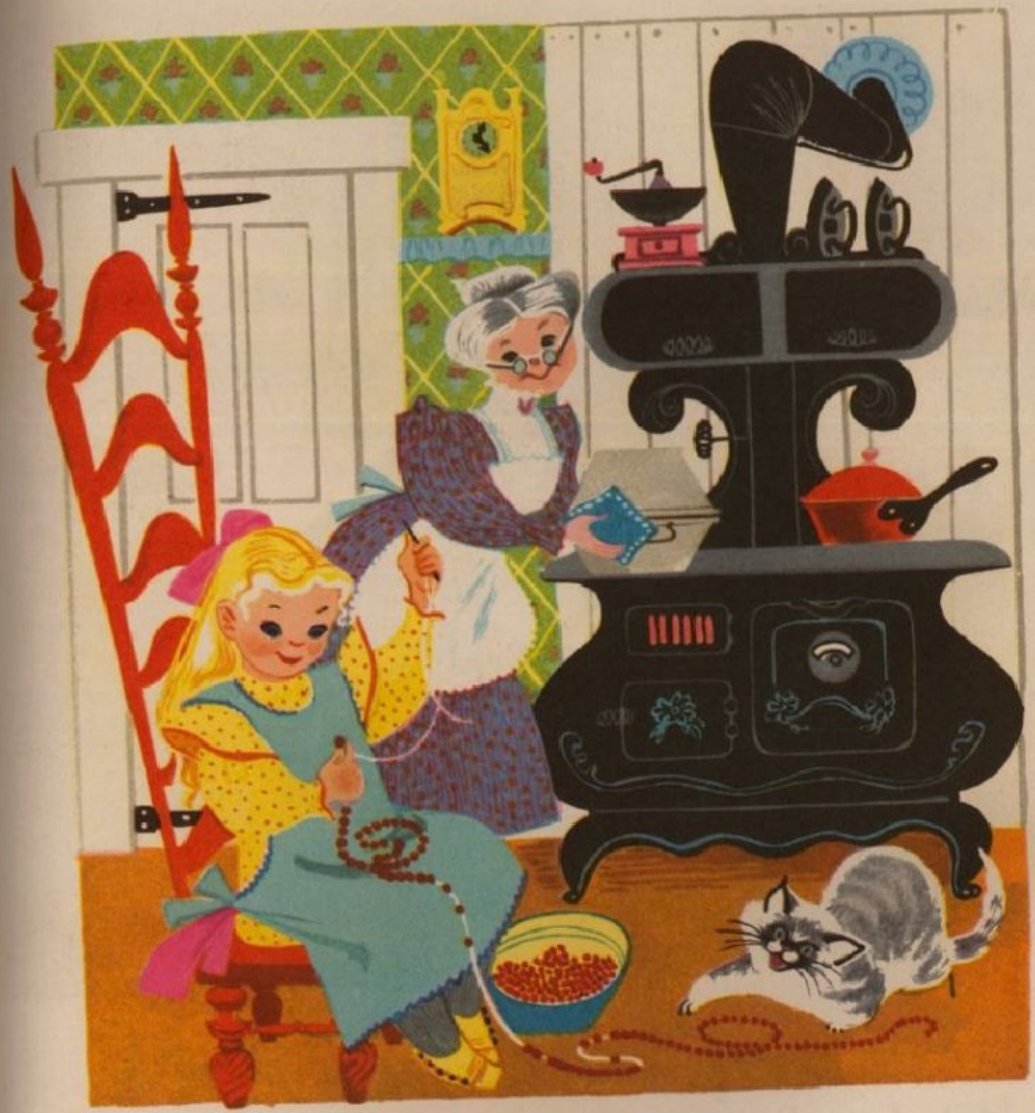
"I have some important business with Bob over at the edge of the pasture," Grandfather said. "Just as soon as he starts looking like a boy again instead of a peppermint stick."

"What is it? May I come, too?" Betty asked.

"It's a secret," Grandfather said very mysteriously.

"Never you mind, child," Grandmother said. "You come along to the kitchen. I have a secret for you, too."

Chop! Chop! Chop! went the secret in the pasture.



Stitch! Stitch! Stitch! went the secret in the kitchen.

"My secret is round and red and there's a lot of it," Betty said at the dinner table.

"Mine is big and pointy and smells good," Bob said.

Bob's surprise was standing in a corner of the parlor. It was big and pointy and smelled very good.

It was the Christmas tree!

What a wonderful busy time there was then, with the lights to put on, and the boxes of colored balls and angels and stars!

And Betty hung her cranberry chain on the tree by her very own self!

Then the family gathered around the old organ to sing carols.

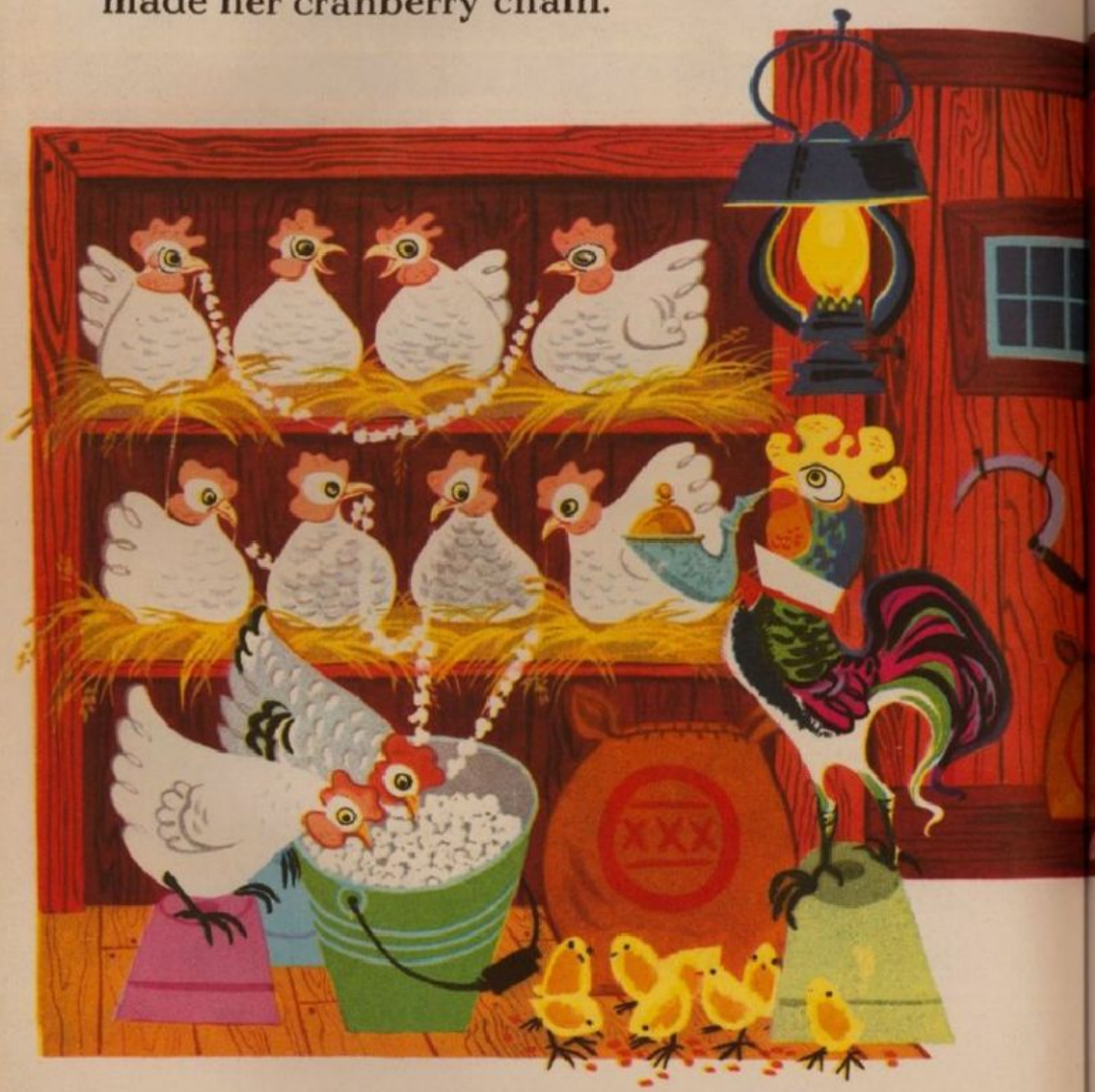
But it had been a long, busy day, and Betty's eyes began to close. And before the last notes of *Silent Night* were sung, she was fast asleep in Grandmother's rocker!

So Grandfather carried Betty up to bed.
And Grandmother took Bob by the hand.

"Grandmother," Bob asked, when he was ready to be tucked in bed, "is everybody in the world getting ready for Christmas the way we are?"

"Everybody," Grandmother assured him. "Why I dare say over in the barn at this very moment even the animals are getting ready for Christmas.

"Perhaps they're having a tree of their own, and, of course, the hens would be making corn garlands for it, just as Betty made her cranberry chain.



"And who'd do better at trimming the tree than the pigeons who live in the loft?

"And the pigs, well, they'd surely be seeing to the goodies for the next day's feast . . . if they didn't eat them all up themselves.

"And the cows might be wrapping up presents. My, how handy their horns would be!

"The little lambs, of course, would give the wool for Christmas stockings. Perhaps they'd even learn to knit themselves, since Christmas is a magic time.

"Even the littlest animals do their bit to help, until at last it's time to go to sleep.

"And now it is time for this little one to go to sleep, too. For remember everywhere—on Christmas Eve—

to all good children

Santa Claus comes!"

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